Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-5 **(Canceled)**

Claim 6 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing drive for reproducing data from a removable information recording medium for recording digital contents having copyright and disc region information indicative of a specific region permitting reproduction of the digital contents, the information reproducing device comprising:

an installation region information storage means for storing installation region information for specifying a region in which the information reproducing drive is installed;

a regional information setting counter which is updated each time the installation region information storage means is updated by a drive user;

a manufacturer initialization counter which is updated each time the regional information setting counter is initialized by a drive manufacturer;

a regional comparing means which delivers a regional coincidence signal upon detection through comparison that the disc region information read from the information recording medium is coincident with the installation region information stored in the installation region information storage means;

a reproduction control means which reproduces the digital contents from the information recording medium only when the regional comparing means has delivered the regional coincidence signal;

an initialization medium decision means for deciding whether or not the information recording medium is a drive manufacturer initialization medium;

a regional information updating means which updates, upon receipt of a command of update of the installation region information from the drive user, the installation region information storage means and the regional information setting counter; and

a manufacturer initialization means which, upon receipt of a command of drive manufacturer initialization from the drive manufacturer, initializes the regional information setting counter and updates the manufacturer initialization counter only when the initialization medium decision means

decides that the information recording medium is the drive manufacturer initialization medium and a count of the manufacturer initialization counter is not an initialization limit value.

Claim 7 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing drive as claimed in Claim 6, wherein when a unique identifier indicative of the drive manufacturer initialization medium is recorded in an application identifier area recorded in a burst cutting area of the information recording medium, the initialization medium decision means decides that the information recording medium is the drive manufacturer initialization medium.

Claim 8 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing drive as claimed in Claim 6, wherein when a unique identifier indicative of the drive manufacturer initialization medium is recorded in an application identifier area recorded in a burst cutting area of the information recording medium and a further unique identifier indicative of the drive manufacturer initialization medium is recorded in an application identifier area recorded in a lead-in area of the information recording medium, the initialization medium decision means decides that the loaded information recording medium is the drive manufacturer initialization medium.

Claim 9 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing drive as claimed in Claim 6, further comprising:

a code storage means for storing a medium identifier code of the drive manufacturer initialization medium which has been used for drive manufacturer initialization by the drive manufacturer,

wherein the manufacturer initialization means stores in the code storage means the medium identifier code read from the drive manufacturer initialization medium.

Claim 10 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing method using an information reproducing drive for reproducing data from a removable information recording medium for recording digital contents having copyright and disc region information indicative of a specific region permitting reproduction of the digital contents, the information reproducing method comprising:

storing in an installation region information storage means installation region information for specifying a region in which the information reproducing drive is installed;

updating a regional information setting counter each time the installation region information storage means is updated by a drive user;

updating a manufacturer initialization counter each time the regional information setting counter is initialized by a drive manufacturer;

delivering from a regional comparing means a regional coincidence signal upon detection through comparison that the disc region information read from the information recording medium is coincident with the installation region information stored in the installation region information storage means;

reproducing the digital contents from the information recording medium only when the regional comparing means has delivered the regional coincidence signal;

deciding whether or not the information recording medium is a drive manufacturer initialization medium;

updating, upon receipt of a command of update of the installation region information from the drive user, the installation region information storage means and the regional information setting counter; and

initializing the regional information setting counter and updating the manufacturer initialization counter upon receipt of a command of drive manufacturer initialization from the drive manufacturer only when the deciding operation decides that the information recording medium is the drive manufacturer initialization medium and a count of the manufacturer initialization counter is not an initialization limit value.

Claim 11 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein when a unique identifier indicative of the drive manufacturer initialization medium is recorded in an application identifier area recorded in a burst cutting area of the information recording medium, the deciding operation decides that the information recording medium is the drive manufacturer initialization medium.

Claim 12 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing method as claimed in Claim 10, wherein when a unique identifier indicative of the drive manufacturer initialization medium is recorded in an application identifier area recorded in a burst cutting area of the information recording medium and a further unique identifier indicative of the drive manufacturer initialization medium is recorded in an application identifier area recorded in a lead-in area of the information recording medium, the deciding operation decides that the information recording medium is the drive manufacturer initialization medium.

Claim 13 **(Previously Presented)** An information reproducing method as claimed in Claim 10, further comprising:

storing a medium identifier code of the drive manufacturer initialization medium which has been used for drive manufacturer initialization by the drive manufacturer.

Claim 14 **(Canceled)**